

East Longmeadow Planning Board

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since 1894

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Alessandro Meccia, vice-chair

Tyde Richards, clerk

George Kingston

Ralph Page

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Minutes of April 7, 2015

Present were: Chair, Michael Carabetta; Vice Chair, Alessandro Meccia; Clerk, Tyde Richards, George Kingston and Ralph Page.

Public Hearing Site Plan Review – Laplante Construction, 61 North Main Street

Chair, Michael Carabetta opened the public hearing for Laplante Construction. Clerk, Tyde Richards read the legal notice and correspondence into the record.

DPW report and requirements are attached as exhibit "A".

The Safety Officer provided the following:

- Building #61 is a bank and #61R is going to be the location of R.E. Laplante business office and two rental spaces.
- A traffic study waiver has been requested and very little additional traffic is expected due to the business being located at the 61 North Main Street property.
- That the parking lot be marked with a white line at the entrance delineating an entrance and exit. Driveway #2 is an exit only.
- Parking lot lighting is planned for and will be attached to the building exterior.
- It was recommended that the building be numbered #61 and #61R being located behind #61.
- It was recommended that a knox box be placed on both building exteriors for entrance into the building after business hours.

Ben Cote of the Fire Department provided:

- A fire alarm system must be installed with strobes on the exterior of both properties.
- A Knox Box must be installed on the exterior of the building, next to an entry doorway.
- The addresses will be placed on both the sign and exterior of both properties, visible from street.
- Fire extinguishers will be placed per Fire Code.
- Mulch of any kind will not be used around buildings.
- Clearance around the front property will be maintained for movement of fire apparatus.

Steve D'Ambrosio, Engineer submitted new plans that evening that included site prep & demo plan, layout plan and additional details on the infiltration system. He said that the site is abutting ¼ mile from the rotary, Brook Street is about 200 feet to the north, North Main Street is to the west and residential properties to the east. Mr. D'Ambrosio said the property is approximately 1.6 acres and zoned commercial. He said that the lot coverage is 8.3% and they are allowed in the commercial zone up to 40% coverage and the minimum for open space is 24% and they are providing in excess 64%. He said that the existing site is grass and the peacock brook runs in the rear of the property. Currently there is an encroachment from Bentley's Bistro and Baystate Rug on the property. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that they will be removing the parking area to create their driveway and from the 200 foot buffer back is all woods. He said the proposed development is a bank building that will front on North Main Street and will be approximately 2,000 square feet. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that they are also proposing a 3,900 square foot office building. Each building will be a single story building totaling just a little less than 6,000 square feet. He said that they are providing the required 30 parking spaces and the required 2 accessible spaces, one in front of the bank building and one in front of the office building. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that all the stormwater will be managed on site with four catch basins that will drain to two subsurface infiltration chambers that are sized to capture and infiltrate up to the 100 year 24 hour storm. Both buildings will have town sewer and each building will have its own water and gas connection. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that the main entrance in & out to the property will be on North Main Street and there will be a driveway that goes behind the bank and the outer lane will have an ATM and a drive up teller on the inner lane. He said there will be a one way only sign for the ATM & drive up teller with signs directing them to the main entrance and they have provided the required 12.5 foot vegetated buffer along the residential lots and are proposing wall packs on the buildings that are designed not to shine into the neighbor's yard. .

Mr. Carabetta addressed the Board for any questions.

Mr. Kingston asked Mr. Carabetta what was the outcome with the Conservation Commission the previous night.

Mr. Carabetta said that they approved it and comments were made by Mark Stinson of DEP and by the DPW but a lot of the answers were provided to the Commission. He said that the Commission did a site visit and were comfortable with what they saw and what was presented to them and they approved the project. Ms. Macdonald said that the Special Conditions were sent that day and the Commission will sign the Order of Conditions tomorrow night.

Mr. Kingston said that it looks like it is going to be a nice project and it looks like there will be adequate screening for the neighbors on the next street over.

Mr. Page said that he attempted to see the plans and typically the Board get plans ahead of time so they can have multiple days to look through them. He said the first thing he sees is the dumpster and obviously the trash truck is going to pull straight and grab the dumpster and asked how the truck is going to get out. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that the property will probably be vacant at the time the trash truck comes in. He said they will be able pull in, back up, swing around and come back out. Mr. Page said part of his concern is that typically a trash truck wants to go in when there is no one there and knowing that there are neighbors just on the other side of the brook listening to the backup alarm at 5:30 or 6:00 in the morning can be extremely aggravating to them.

Bill Laplante said at their 94 Maple Street location the trash gets picked up about 7:15 a.m. because there are residential neighbors around them. He said the trash truck has orders to come at 7:15 a.m. because nobody occupies their building before they open at 9:00 a.m. at the new location. Mr. Laplante said that it has never been an issue and he has never received any complaints from the neighbors.

Mr. Page asked what the height of the overflow at the street for the infiltration system is. Mr. D'Ambrosio said the invert at the bottom of the chambers is 94.9 elevation. He said they are proposing in the 100 year storm, the water will be 6 inches above the chamber that is at elevation 97 +/- . Mr. D'Ambrosio said as they head to the street the invert is 98.5 so they have quite of bit until it gets into the towns system. Mr. Page asked what the height is in the very back drain. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that it is 99.5 so it is a foot higher then the over flow that heads towards the town's system. Mr. Page asked if there were a 100 year storm would there be surface water bubbling out there going directly down into the wetlands. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that he doesn't anticipate that happening at all. Mr. Page asked if there will be berm going in at the back side of the parking lot. Mr. D'Ambrosio said yes there is a curb on the back behind the dumpster and it is sloped and goes from 3 to 1. He said that the dumpster will be pitched back not towards the curb and they are looking to pitch the water back into the driveway and send it into the catch basins.

Mr. Meccia said that the fire department was concerned about mulch around the buildings and said that he didn't see what was going to be put there. Mr. Laplante said during the round table they said that they would use crushed stone around the building and the fire department said that it would be fine to use mulch in any landscaped area away from the buildings. Mr. Meccia said his other concern was with the dumpster because it will be difficult for a truck backing up in that one spot without making a ton of noise and doesn't know if the truck is going to make it in two tries.

Mr. Carabetta asked what the distance between the building and the property line is. Mr. D'Ambrosio said 49 feet from the building edge to the curb. Mr. Carabetta said that he thinks it will workout.

Mr. Richards said the he feels that the distance is comfortable between the building and property line.

Mr. Carabetta asked if they are the planning on putting a fence where the screenings are going. Mr. Laplante said that he hasn't planned on that yet and said it is certainly something they will consider.

Mr. Kingston asked where the snow will be placed. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that there is some availability to push it off to the side. He said if it is not a large event there is some storage on the site but if it is something similar to the past year they will need to truck the snow off site because they can't be pushing snow down the slope into the riverfront area.

Mr. Page asked what kind of native plants will be planted. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that a detailed list has been provided to the Conservation Commission on what will be planted and the amount that will be planted. Mr. Page asked between the native plants will they be planting grass and will it be maintained. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that it will be left to grow naturally and will not be mowed. Mr. Page said that a wall was mentioned earlier and asked where it will be placed. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that they are proposing a retaining wall on the south side and have the details on what DPW is requesting.

Mr. Carabetta addressed the audience for any questions.

Stephen Torres, 87 North Main Street asked what kind of signage will be there and where will it be located.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said that they are still working that out. Mr. LaPlante said that they don't have any signage proposed at the time and there will be signage on the building itself. He said that they will be looking into a Special Permit or a Variance down the road possibly to do something different for the directory sign because to meet the regulations there are just a few small spots they can put it.

Mr. Carabetta said that any signage will have to come back before the Planning Board for approval and the directional signs will have to be approved for traffic.

Tim Conway, 78 Nottingham Drive said he is in support of the project for two reasons, it will bring jobs to the town and also some tax revenue.

John Romito, 21- 25 North Main Street said that he has known the Laplante family for a long time and what they say is what they will do and it will be a classy job and it will look nice.

Sid Starks, 28 Elm Street said Laplante's style is always very professional and it will bring up the tax base. He said that they mentioned that the dumpster will be emptied at

7:00 a.m. but when a driver has a chance to get there early a lot of times 7:00 a.m. turns into 3:00 a.m. Mr. Starks asked if that could be monitored and possibly have an alternate site and be looked at in 6 months or year to see if that is being adhered to by the driver. He also was wondering if they are going to have parking from the restaurant next door after hours because the sound really carries to the residents along Brook Street. Mr. Starks asked if it was possible to increase the shrubbery or install a fence to prevent any shining lights.

Mr. Laplante said the design of lighting on the building and the wall pack units they are using are designed just for that. He said that they will go out from the building and concentrate its spread 30 to 35 feet and it will defuse from there.

Tessiana Torres, 87 North Main Street said she is concerned with how close Brook Street is to the exit driveway.

Mr. Carabetta said that there is actually a piece of land between the parcel that has an Insurance Company on it so there is some distance between that and Brook Street. Mr. Meccia added that there is about 150 feet between the parcel and Brook Street. Mr. Carabetta said that the police department has taken a look at it and they are going to give the Board their recommendation based on safety factors. He said that was taken into consideration when they gave the Board their approval and they aren't asking for any more traffic signs or traffic lights. He said that the traffic flow is going to come in & out of that parking lot and it is not going to be a significant impact. Mr. Carabetta said that the Board has to rely on them because they are the safety officers.

Phil McCarthy, 9 Brook Street said when someone is traveling up North Main Street there isn't a speed limit sign until you pass Brook Street and by that time everyone is going well over the speed limit. He asked if there was anyway to get a speed limit sign somewhere in between Brook Street and the gas station. Mr. Carabetta said that there is one there but unfortunately people are not obeying it. Mr. McCarthy asked what the height of the building will be. Mr. Carabetta said 27 feet high single story building.

Mark Harrington, 17 Black Dog Lane said that he is in favor of it and thinks it is a good opportunity to turn the vacant piece of property into tax revenue for the town.

Mr. Carabetta addressed the Board for any further questions or comments.

Mr. Kingston said his only thought is relative to Brook Street because they are proposing to put deciduous trees there which means in the winter the screening is going to be minimal. He was wondering if they would consider doing evergreen type of trees rather than a deciduous one so that there is screening year round.

Mr. Laplante said that is something that he would want as much as they would want. He said either there would be a solid fence and plantings or plantings that will stay all year round.

Mr. Kingston said his only comment would be that he knows that the type of signage is going to depend a lot on what bank is going in there and reminded the applicant that the Board needs to issue the sign permit before the sign goes in.

Mr. Laplante said that they intend to have something in before the completion and that they will submit a sign permit before hand.

Mr. Page asked when exiting the teller window area will the left lane be marked left turn only and will the right lane be marked right turn only.

Mr. Laplante said that they had a discussion with the safety officer that they would be marked as two out going lanes with signs saying that it is one-way. He said that they didn't get into the right hand side or left hand side.

Mr. Page said his only other concern is that he would like more time to review it in depth and personally he would like a chance to look at a full plan.

Mr. McCarthy said if somebody goes through with their headlights on he would imagine that his whole house is going to get lit up and if there is enough screening that will block that will be fine. Mr. Carabetta said that he thinks the screening plan and/or bushes they are talking about is to try and eliminate those issues for him.

Mr. Page asked Mr. Carabetta if they close the public hearing and if there are additional changes to the plan is that going to end up being a problem. Ms. Macdonald said that they won't be able to accept any plans. Mr. Page said he personally thinks there should be changes made if nothing else to make some of the shrub work that's in there evergreens. He said maybe they can remove the maple trees and make sure pine trees or something like that are put in. Mr. Page said that he would be more inclined for the Board to continue it. Ms. Macdonald said that it could be a condition of the approval to change the trees out and she isn't sure if they would need to see that on a plan.

Mr. Laplante said that they will work with the Board and the neighbors and they want to make sure everyone around them is happy with the plan.

Mr. Kingston said in his opinion changing the species in the landscape plan would not be a significant alteration to the site plan and they could take it as a minor alteration.

Mr. Page added that his only concern is that he hasn't had a chance to review the whole thing.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said the changes that they made that the additional information was submitted that evening. He said that the buildings have not changed and the parking lot has not changed since they submitted the plans on March 16th. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that they provided additional information on the dimensions of the parking and that they didn't actually change they just made the information a little more clear. He said if they actually took a scale to it they would have seen that they met the dimensional requirements and that they just tried to provide supporting information of what they already presented back in March. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that they had a drainage plan,

they had a landscaping plan and that evening they presented a utility plan supporting what they had already submitted.

Mr. Carabetta said one thing he would like to mention is that DPW asked about test pits in the infiltration areas. He said that he is assuming they are aware of that and that they would like to be there when they do in case the numbers change. Mr. D'Ambrosio said that would be alright with them.

There being no further discussion and upon motion duly made by George Kingston and seconded by Alessandro Meccia, the Board voted (4-1) to close the Public Hearing. Upon motion duly made by George Kingston and seconded by Alessandro Meccia, the Board voted (4-1) to approve the Site Plan conditioned upon screening changed to evergreen plantings of some kind and that DPW be present for the test pits as well as the Police and Fire recommendations.

At that time the Board voted to take a recess.

The Board resumed the meeting and after discussion and upon motion duly made by George Kingston and seconded by Alessandro Meccia, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to waive the traffic study for 62 North Main Street.

Request for Signage – Berkshire Bank, 72 Shaker Road

The Board reviewed the proposed signage for Berkshire Bank, 72 Shaker Road. The signage consists of two signs, one building (sign B) measuring 251.75" x 44" for a total of 77 square feet and a ground sign measuring 87"x 82" for a total of 50 square feet.

Upon motion duly made by Alessandro Meccia and seconded by Ralph Page, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) for signage replacing Berkshire Bank signs located at the site and conditioned upon obtaining approval and a permit from the Building Inspector.

Request for Signage – Tranquility Nails and Spa, 628 North Main Street

The Board reviewed the proposed signage for Tranquility Nails and Spa, 628 North Main Street and determined that the application was incomplete. The applicant will need to resubmit when the application is complete.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Macdonald informed the Board that Ryan Daley was still working on the low impact development research project. She said that he had a couple of questions and that she was able to answer two of them with regard to the stormwater rules & regulations. Ms. Macdonald said that Ryan asked if the Planning Board intends to add onto the standards specifically to mention low impact development and/or implement best management practices through subdivisions rules and regulations. She said that the Board had mentioned it but really haven't talked about it and he would like to know their thoughts on it. Mr. Page asked if best management practices are included in the general by-laws and voted in. Ms. Macdonald said not through subdivisions rules & regulations.

Mr. Kingston said personally he is in favor of that with the understanding that there are issues with DPW and said that the Board has been going back and forth with detention basins for decades. He said that the LID replaces detention basins with other types of stormwater management systems like they are doing with the project at 61 North Main Street. Mr. Kingston said that there has been a reluctance on DPW's part to do away with detention basins even though they don't like the idea that they are not maintained properly. He said that they have talked with DPW for at least 2 years and nothing has happened.

Mr. Page said under the subdivisions rules and regulations they are the Planning Board's rules and regulations of which they generally go to the DPW and ask for their expertise on. He said with all do respect they are the Planning Board's rules and regulations and if they so choose to make a change they can make a change without going to DPW. Mr. Page said that he thinks if they started to go forward he thinks at that point they would jump in and give their opinion and he concurs with Mr. Kingston. Mr. Carabetta, Mr. Meccia and Mr. Richards all said that they would like to discuss it further.

Ms. Macdonald said the other thing Ryan said was that he would be reaching out to Fire & DPW to talk about their objections and/or thoughts on LID. He said that he understands it was another major concern that Mr. Kingston mentioned during their initial meeting and asked if the Board knows of any other stakeholders or people who feel strongly one way or the other about LID that he should be contacting.

Mr. Kingston said he should be contacting the Police also and suggested that Ryan contact Brad Campbell of Western Mass Home Builders Association which represents most of the builders and developers in the area.

Michael Giampietro, Bay Path College

Ms. Macdonald said that she received an e-mail from Michael Giampietro, VP for Finance & Administrative Services for Bay Path College. The e-mail said that one of his colleague's son who is a freshman at Boston College is interested in the field of Planning & Conservation and would like to secure an unpaid internship in the area this summer, no requirement on hours or length of experience. Does your office offer such an opportunity. Ms. Macdonald said that she has nothing for Planning but Conservation had Tom Florence's son as an intern 2 years ago who marked some trails. Mr. Carabetta asked if there is enough in fact to give that gentleman. Ms. Macdonald suggested to Mr. Carabetta that he bring it up at the next Conservation meeting because she thinks there is more for Conservation. She asked if there maybe something for an intern to do for the Open Space. Mr. Page said going forward a lot of the leg work could be done by an intern. Ms. Macdonald said that she could have him come in and talk with Mr. Page and the Vice Chair of that Committee and let him know what kind of leg work you would like him to do if they are interested in that. Mr. Kingston said that his concern is that an intern needs supervision and doesn't know if they have the time or energy to do that. He said if they don't it would be unfair to him and suggested that he could contact Tim Brennan at PVPC to see if they use interns.

Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of March 10, 2015 and upon motion duly made by Ralph Page and seconded by Alessandro Meccia voted (5-0) to approve.

With no further business and upon motion duly made by George Kingston and seconded by Ralph Page, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

For the Board,

Tyde Richards, Clerk